



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/664,005	09/16/2003	Kenneth A. Mabry	2724/2A	3903
23638	7590	05/04/2004		
ADAM EVANS, P.A. (formerly Adams, Schwartz & Evans, P.A.) 2180 TWO WACHOVIA CENTER CHARLOTTE, NC 28282			EXAMINER CHAMBERS, MICHAEL S	
			ART UNIT 3711	PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED: 05/04/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

# Office Action Summary

Application N .

10/664,005

Applicant(s)

MABRY, KENNETH A.

Examiner

Michael Chambers

Art Unit

3711

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear what claim 7 is directed to. If the claim is intended to be directed to the method of claim 1 with further limitations directed to the bat, then the phrase "A training bat according to claim 1" should be amended to read "A method according to claim 1". However, if the claim is directed to a bat, per se, as recited in claim 1, absent the method steps of claim 1, then claim 7 is an improper dependent claim because it does not include all of the limitations of the parent claim; and it must be either canceled or rewritten in independent form. See MPEP 608.01(n)II on page 600-76 as well as 35 USC112(4).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1,3-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Muhlhausen. Muhlhausen discloses a handle (21), a striking element (30, 2:43-44), a

connecting member (28a,b). Although the claim language does not clearly disclose the pitching and hitting of the ball, fig 3 clearly shows the use of the practice bat in use.

As to claim 3: Muhlhausen discloses a handle that conforms to a conventional handle (21).

As to claim 4: Muhlhausen discloses a metallic rod (4:47-48).

As to claim 5: Muhlhausen discloses a ball striking element that extends outwardly from the handle (fig 3 item 10') and a length equivalent to a conventional bat (3:61-64).

As to claim 6: Muhlhausen discloses a training bat of various weights (3:12-16). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have employed a bat of conventional weight in order to permit the player to train with a bat that simulates a real life game.

Claims 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Muhlhausen. Muhlhausen discloses a training bat (10 ), a handle (21 ), an elongated ball-striking element having a diameter no greater than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the diameter of a conventional bat (4:39-40), a connecting member (28a,b) and a weight assembly (50). Although the claim language does not clearly disclose the pitching and hitting of the ball, fig 3 clearly shows the use of the practice bat in use.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and

Art Unit: 3711

the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muhlhausen as applied to claim 1 and further in view of Actor. Muhlhausen discloses the elements of claim 2, however it fails to disclose the method steps of providing a ball smaller than a conventional baseball that is made of a soft resilient material. Actor discloses the method steps of providing a ball smaller than a conventional baseball and that is made of a soft resilient material (9:15-24). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have included the step of using the ball of Actor with the device of Muhlhausen in order to increase the skill of the batter by providing a smaller target and increase the safety to the batter in case the ball hit the batter.

### ***Double Patenting***

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1- 19 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-14 of U.S. Patent No. 6,561,930. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably

distinct from each other because it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have included the method steps of providing a ball and swinging at the ball in order to utilize the practice bat of 6,561,930 in the normal fashion.

**Conclusion**

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Chambers whose telephone number is 703-306-5516. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30-5:00.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steve Garbe can be reached on 703-308-1207. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

6561930\*5823894\*6050908

April 30, 2004

Michael Chambers  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3711

  
Stephen P. Garbe  
Primary Examiner